

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

RE: THE ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner's indication of the allowability of the subject matter of claims 7, 8, 14 and 15 is respectfully acknowledged.

New claims 19-26 have been added of which independent claims 19, 21, 23 and 25 recite one or more features of allowable claims 7, 8, 14 and/or 15. No new matter has been added, and no new issues with respect to patentability have been raised.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new independent claims 19, 21, 23 and 25, and new claims 20, 22, 24 and 26 respectively depending therefrom are all in condition for immediate allowance.

CLAIM FEE

The application was originally filed with 18 claims of which 1 was independent. The application now contains 22 claims, of which 5 are independent. Accordingly, a claim fee in the amount of \$520.00 for the addition of 2 extra independent claims and 2 extra claims in total is submitted herewith. In addition, authorization is hereby given to charge any additional fees which may be determined to be required to Account No. 06-1378.

RE: THE CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the pair of bars is fixed on a moving bolster in parallel with a work transfer direction, that the feed carrier is held by each of the pair of bars in a manner movable along the bars, that the feed drive mechanism drives the feed carrier along the bars in the work transfer direction, and that the base is provided on the feed carrier in a manner movable in a lift direction. In addition, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the lift drive mechanism drives the base in the lift direction so that the base moves vertically.

Claim 2 has been amended to recite that the clamp drive mechanism drives the base in a clamp direction horizontally orthogonal to the work transfer direction.

Claims 10 and 17 have been amended to recite that the bar-interval adjusting device is provided on the moving bolster.

And claims 11 and 18 have been amended to make a minor grammatical improvement.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be approved and entered.

RE: THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-6, 9-13 and 16-18 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by USP 4,785,657 ("Votava"). This rejection, however, is respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

According to the present invention as recited in amended claim 1, a work transfer device for press machines is provided which comprises a pair of bars fixed on a moving bolster in parallel with a work transfer direction, a feed carrier held by each of the pair of bars in a manner movable along the bars, and a feed drive mechanism for driving the feed carrier along the bars in the work transfer direction. In addition, as recited in amended claim 1, the work transfer device comprises a base provided on the feed carrier in a manner movable in a lift direction, a lift drive mechanism for driving the base in the lift direction so that the base moves vertically, and a work holder detachably attached to the base for holding a work.

That is, as shown in Fig. 2, the work transfer device 41 includes feed carriers 52 held on two bars 14 in a manner such that each feed carrier 52 is movable along the respective bar 14 and specifically along a pair of rails 51 arranged on the bar 14. This movement is enabled by the feed drive mechanism which drives the feed carriers 52 along the bars 14 in the work transfer direction. With this structure, in view of the movability of the

feed carriers 52 along the bars 14, the position of each feed carrier 52 relative to the bar 14 on which it is arranged varies. And with this structure, the ability to move the feed carriers 52 relative to the bars 14 facilitates optimization of the work flow of the work through the press machine.

It is respectfully submitted that Votava does not disclose, teach or suggest feed carriers which are held by and movable along a pair of bars.

Votava describes a transfer feed mechanism for use in a power press which includes a pair of rails 16, 17 on which finger units 14 for moving work pieces are mounted. In Votava, support structure 51 supports rods 50 and is movable along guide rails 46 which guide transverse motion of the rails 16, 17 (see column 3, lines 48-59). In addition, a transversely disposed support member 80 carries the rails 16, 17 (see column 4, lines 52-55). And in Votava, the pivoting motion of a rocker arm 66 causes movement of support member 80 which leads to a longitudinal stroke for the rails 16, 17 (see column 4, lines 57-62).

In contrast to the present invention as recited in amended claim 1, in Votava there is no component (i.e., a feed carrier) which is held by a pair of bars and is movable along the bars. Indeed, the support structure 51 of Votava, considered by the Examiner to correspond to the feed carrier of the present invention, does not move along the rails 16, 17, considered by

the Examiner to correspond to the bars of the present invention. Instead, in Votava, the support structure 51 is fixed to ends of the rails 16, 17 and cannot move along the rails 16, 17.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended claim 1, and claims 2-6, 9-13 and 16-18 depending therefrom, clearly patentably distinguishes over Votava, taken singly or in combination with any of the other prior art references of record, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103, along with allowable new claims 19-26.

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In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

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